

Medical repairmen support hospital in saving lives



Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Staff Sgt. Ken Deveaney, medical maintenance non-commissioned officer in charge, 48th Combat Support Hospital, Fort Meade, Md. examines a part from an oxygen generator that broke down.

Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – The medical equipment that saves lives is not simple equipment. The Combat Support Hospital here has a biomedical repair team to keep the equipment in working condition.

These “repairmen” maintain medical equipment, perform preventive maintenance checks and services, check calibrations and make repairs. They also assist in renovations of the hospital. In addition, they research and suggest

equipment the hospital needs.

“Our workload varies, some days we repair 8-10 units, other days, it’s simple fixes so we can repair 15-20 units,” said Staff Sgt. Ken Deveaney, medical maintenance non-commissioned officer in charge, 48th Combat Support Hospital, Fort Meade, Md.

“Some repairs can take five minutes while others can take three days,” he added.

Repairs usually only take three days or less because the manufacturer designs the equip-

— See **REPAIR**, Page 3

Fort Rucker weatherman reporting live from Afghanistan

By Lee Ann Smith
Eagle Staff Writer

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — The weather in Bagram Jan. 6 called for temperatures to reach the mid-to-upper 40s.

“The weather here is not too bad,” said U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Tim Fields, non-commissioned officer in charge, Combat Weather Team. “It was 26 degrees this morning. We’ve had good weather lately — the sun has been shining and we’ve had clear skies at night.”

Not only that, but Bagram is surrounded on three sides by mountains, which helps block out a lot of cold air from Russia.

“So it doesn’t get unbearably cold,” he said. “A strong system will push over them and it can get really cold, but it doesn’t happen that often.”

Fields isn’t obsessed with the weather in Afghanistan — it’s just his job.

At Fort Rucker, Fields is the NCOIC in the Forecast Section of the 6th Weather Flight (Base Weather Station) at Cairns Army



Courtesy photo

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Tim Fields sits on the edge of Bagram’s air control tower.

Airfield. Currently, he is deployed to Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan as the NCOIC of the Combat Weather Team.

Fields, a native of Bellevue, Neb., is the third forecaster from Cairns to serve a rotation in Afghanistan.

“We do a constant rotation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom,” he said. “Our

station chief, Rolan Keene was here from June to September, and our science officer, Capt. Andy Wilkinson was here from August to November.”

Fields is expected to remain in Afghanistan until sometime in March. He has been

— See **WEATHER**, Page 3

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Many of the designs for the new World Trade Center call for skyscrapers larger than the previous buildings.

New plans are viewed by many

NEW YORK — In the aftermath of the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, many building experts predicted the death of the skyscraper.

Amid the raw emotion of those days, Larry Silverstein, leaseholder of the World Trade Center's land, said he wanted the destroyed twin towers rebuilt, in defiance of the terrorists who brought them down.

At the time, many winced at the thought and suggested more modest proposals. Some even predicted the death of skyscrapers as tall as the 110-story twin towers, which had been the tallest buildings in the world at the time of their construction in the early 1970s, saying people would be concerned about their vulnerability to terrorist attacks.

Yet in the ensuing months, it became clear that the skyscraper was not dead. People continued to go to work in high-rises, and developers continued to build tall buildings around the globe. And as time has passed, the ideas of what can be built on the trade center site have gone from modest to grandiose.

This week, New Yorkers will debate nine proposals for what to build on the World Trade Center site. Four of them call for again building the world's tallest building, taller even than the destroyed towers.

The public is paying close attention. More than 6 million visitors have viewed the proposals on the Web site of the Lower Manhattan Development Corp. — the agency overseeing the redevelopment — and another 70,000 have seen the proposals in person.

The debate is bound to be one of the largest architectural critiques ever.

"New York has always been the great vertical metropolis," explains Carol Willis, director and founder of the city's Skyscraper Museum. "New York requires — it desires — to see something recognizable world-wide."

AOL chairman to step down

NEW YORK — Steve Case will step down as chairman of AOL Time Warner in May. However, he will continue as a board member, the company said Sunday in a news release.

Case was the driving force behind the 2001 merger of then-booming Internet portal America Online and Time Warner, the media giant that owned an array of film, TV, music and publishing companies, to form one of the world's largest media companies.

However, the company has experienced a severe drop in its market value since the merger, which came at the peak of the Internet stock price boom, and disgruntled shareholders had directed their ire at Case.

The move will be made effective at the annual shareholders meeting in May, the statement said.

N. Korea blames U.S.

NEW YORK — North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations is placing the blame for escalating tensions over the country's nuclear program squarely with what it says is the open hostility of the United States.

The comments came as Pyongyang continued with its hardline stance, warning in a newspaper commentary Sunday that any military confrontation would be met with what it called "a sea of fire."

But former ambassador to the U.N. Governor Bill Richardson says North Korea spews hostile rhetoric as a way of trying to obtain something from another nation.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with CNN, Ambassador Pak Gil Yon said Washington had "abandoned all commitments and promises" made to his country.

As a result of this and what he called a "constant threat of military aggression", he said North Korea had no choice but to

take measures to defend itself.

Such measures, he warned, may involve the North dropping its self-imposed moratorium on ballistic missile tests.

"The future developments with respect to nuclear activities will depend on the United States," Pak said.

OPEC to raise daily oil output

VIENNA, Austria — The world's major oil-producing countries decided Sunday to increase production by 1.5 million barrels per day to make up for shortfalls caused by the political crisis in Venezuela.

Kuwaiti officials confirmed the decision after the 11-member Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries held informal meetings.

Shortfalls of 2 million barrels per day caused by an oil workers' strike in Venezuela have pushed prices past OPEC's target levels of \$22-\$28 a barrel to more than \$30 a barrel in recent days.

"OPEC is trying to send a very strong message that it will do its utmost to stabilize demand and supply," OPEC President Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah was quoted by The Associated Press as telling a press conference.

OPEC officials said the increase would go into effect Feb. 1 and boost production to 24.5 million barrels a day. That would be an increase of about 7 percent, said United Arab Emirates oil minister Obaid bin Saif al-Nasseri.

Reminder:

A subdued U.S. Flag is prohibited for wear. Federal Law (Title IV, U.S. Code) and Service Regulations direct that official uses of Old Glory replicas — desert camouflage uniform, flight suit, etc. — will only be of Red, White and Blue colors. No sand, brown, green or other colors are authorized.



REPAIR, from Page 1 ———
ment that way.

“Most equipment has an easier repair fix in the field. The more complicated the equipment, the more problems you are going to have, so the manufacturers try to keep it as simple as possible,” said Deveaney.

Medical field equipment is not only made to be easier to repair, but also breaks down less.

“The equipment might not be as high speed as in the rear, but it’s a lot more durable,” said Sgt. Valdez “Johnny” Bravo, medical equipment repairman, 48th.

While deployed, the team takes on more tasks than they would in a regular hospital.

“In a combat environment, our whole realm of repair is ex-

panded. In a normal hospital, we repair strictly the equipment that takes care of patients – here it can jump to anything,” said Deveaney.

Bravo agrees.

“There are some things that fall into a gray area – sewage lines, washing machines and water pumps – and people come running to us to fix them, because they know we are electronically inclined. I’ve even fixed a couple of PlayStations and microwaves,” said Bravo. “We’re the hospital handymen.”

The biomedes do have problems here they wouldn’t have in the United States.

“The hardest part about being here is ordering parts. If you order a part in the states – depend-

ing on the priority – you get it one to three days later. Here, depending on the part, it’s one to three weeks, if not later,” said Bravo.

“You take a lot for granted in the states. Here, if you need a screw, you are running all over base trying to find someone who has one. We have a very limited supply,” he added.

There may be problems the biomedes deal with, but they keep the hospital running.

“If there were no biomedes, it would really cut down on the care the hospital could give to the patients coming in. If they lost an X-Ray, it would just be plain guesswork, they’d inject solutions with a syringe and without the oxygen generation system surgical patients wouldn’t be treated,” said



Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

Staff Sgt. Ken Deveaney, medical maintenance non-commissioned officer in charge, 48th Combat Support Hospital, Fort Meade, Md. examines a part from an oxygen generator that broke down.

Deveaney. “It’s a good feeling knowing the equipment we repair is saving lives.”

WEATHER, from Page 1 ———
in the country since December.

“I left Dothan on Dec. 9 and arrived here on Dec. 13 at 4 a.m., so it was dark when I got here,” he said. “We are in blackout condition at night — most lights are extinguished — which was a strange feeling.”

At least Keene and Wilkinson had given him the scoop of what to expect in support of Army and Air Force operations.

Fields said the combat weather team is made up of 10 forecasters who provide weather support to Coalition Joint Task Force-180, Combined Task Force-82, the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group and various Marine Corps aviation units based at Bagram.

“We are involved in just about everything that goes on as far as planning through to mission execution,” he said. “We supply planning and weather intelligence data for close air support, reconnaissance, surveillance, convoys, air lift, helicopter operations and medevac missions in the entire combined joint operations area.”

What makes the job more difficult in the field is there are no weather stations or airports to provide forecasters with indigenous weather data. Forecasters depend on satellites, looking at clouds and using computer weather models to forecast what will happen in the next four to five days.

“We plan five-day forecasts for 12 different locations,” he said.

Special software allows them to predict the weather and the affects it will have on precision guided mutations — smart bombs. Fields said the weather can have an affect on the bomb’s sensors.

Shifts for the forecasters run about 12 to 14 hours a day. “We work six days a week, with one day off,” he said.

Job-wise, he knew what to expect, but nothing could prepare him for life in Afghanistan.

“It is really, really dusty here,” he said. “It permeates everything no matter how much you try to prevent it — it is a never ending task. People keep their personal CD players and digital cameras in Ziplock bags.”

Having been stationed at Fort Rucker since March 1997, Fields said he misses a few things about home. He misses the freedom of jumping in his car and going somewhere, and eating lunch at Two Sisters restaurant in Daleville.

But despite that, the 42-year-old is happy to be serving in a field unit.

“I volunteered to come,” he said. “Training is important, but it is good to get out and support the warfighters. When you are in a training environment you lose touch with what goes on in the operational world ... and

it’s good to be doing what I’m trained to do.

“With some of the things we do, I get that warm, fuzzy feeling inside, especially when I see the American flag flying and all the people from the different services and agencies working together,” he said. “It gives you a sense of pride.”

There are other things that lend to Fields’ patriotic spirit in Afghanistan. In support of morale, the forecasters fly American flags from the tower for service members to send to family and friends back home, or to keep for themselves.

“After we fly the flag, we print out a certificate that states the flag was flown from the tower at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan,” he said.

Fields also is involved in taking donations of blankets, clothes, shoes and school supplies such as pencils, pens and paper as part of the 455th EOG’s Adopt-A-Village Program.

“After 20-plus years of war the Afghans have virtually nothing left,” he said.

Fields accepts donations from home. “It’s a way that Americans can make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves.”

This story originally ran in the Dothan Eagle, Dothan, Ala. Jan. 6 and is reprinted with permission.

Distance, joint-environment presents rare re-up challenges

By Maj. William Mott
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — “Re-up re-up you’re crazy, re-up re-up you’re out of your mind.” Cadences like that can make any Career Counselors job tougher than it already is. But Sgt. First Class David Gross, Career Counselor from XVIII Airborne Corps has it even harder. He covers K2, Kandahar, Kabul and points in between.

Gross faces some unique challenges that many stateside career counselors do not. As the senior career counselor for Coalition Joint Task Force-180 he has to stay current on the myriad of military occupational specialties in theater and the bonuses available for each depending on the soldier’s career status. “I have talked with someone from every career management field,” said Gross.

Another unique aspect of his assignment is having to counsel reserve and National Guard soldiers, something he wouldn’t normally have to do in the states, where they would simply go to their local recruiter or retention office. Gross also confers with our sister services to glean possible strategies from their approaches.

Tax-free bonuses, special military schools, assignment of choice, and MOS switching are some of the incentives that Gross offers to soldiers based on their individual qualifications and current policy. These incentives play a major part in matching the soldier’s desires with the needs of the Army.

Gross tracks soldiers in the theater to ensure that they get the correct information about reenlistment options. He emphasizes that without the close assistance of the soldier’s leadership he could not make the program work.

Gross works with leaders and retention NCOs stationed throughout the theater to better serve the soldiers. The primary responsibility lies on the command managing the soldier’s military career with proactive leadership, effective counseling, and timely feedback to the soldier. “Taking the time to say ‘hey you did a great job’ can go a long way,” said Gross.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “The King of Texas.” In this adaptation of Shakespeare’s King Lear, self-made ranch tycoon John Lear divides his holdings among his daughters but finds that once they have his property, they reject him.

Tomorrow’s movie will be “Tuskagee Air-men.”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER REPORT:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>
Bagram:	Partly cloudy H: 55F L: 19F	Partly cloudy H: 52F L: 21F
Kandahar:	Partly cloudy H: 63F L: 32F	Haze H: 61F L: 30F
Kabul:	Haze H: 54F L: 23F	Haze H: 50F L: 25F
Uzbekistan:	Mostly cloudy H: 56F L: 32F	Mostly cloudy H: 59F L: 36F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Chad Pennington was sacked four times by the Raiders.

Gannon leads Raiders in rout of Jets

OAKLAND, Calif. — The playoffs have been unkind to the Oakland Raiders for almost two decades. So they took out 19 years of frustration on the New York Jets.

League MVP Rich Gannon and the Raiders showed why this season might be different from all the others since 1983 with a 30-10 playoff rout Sunday. They knew the surest road to the AFC championship game was to stay at home and avoid tuck rules and snowy night games in New England.

Now they get Tennessee, whom they beat 52-25 at home in September, back at the Oakland Coliseum for a shot at the Super Bowl. The Raiders have not been to the big game since winning it against Washington in 1984.

"These chances are very rare," veteran All-Pro safety Rod Woodson said. "I think we are a mature team that understands what we have here."

Bucs use offense, defense to rout Niners

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Buccaneers proved their offense can be just as dangerous as their league-leading defense.

Brad Johnson returned from a monthlong layoff to throw for 196 yards and two touchdowns, and Tampa Bay shut down Jeff Garcia and Terrell Owens to beat the San Francisco 49ers 31-6 on Sunday.

The victory sends Tampa Bay to Philadelphia for next Sunday's NFC championship game against the Eagles, who ended the Bucs' season in the first round of the playoffs at Veterans Stadium the past two years.



The Bucs surround Garrison Hearst during Sunday's playoff game.

The Bucs have lost all six of their road playoff games, including three years ago in the NFC championship game.

At home against the 49ers, the Bucs did just about everything right.

"As soon as we got up 7-0, I said: 'Hey, our offense is rolling today, fellas,'" All-Pro defensive tackle Warren Sapp said. "The only thing we've got to do is stick a couple of three-and-outs on them."

The defense took care of that, then the offense had its way.

McNair leads as Titans win in overtime

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans didn't need another Music City Miracle — just a few kicks and a helpful call from the latest NFL officiating crew to make playoff headlines.

After a series of kicks — some counted, some didn't — Joe Nedney made a 26-yard field goal 2:15 into overtime that gave the Titans a bruising 34-31 playoff victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers on Saturday.

Officiating, in the news all week, once again played a key role in the final outcome.

Steelers coach Bill Cowher sprinted across the field and shouted at referee Ron Blum after the winning kick. As the Titans celebrated, Cowher claimed he called a timeout before the kick.

See **SPORTS**, Page 6

Playoff results at a glance

Philadelphia 30, Atlanta 6

Passing: Vick (Atl.) 274 yds.

Rushing: Staley (Phi.) 63 yds.

Receiving: Thrash (Phi.) 77 yds.

Tennessee 34, Pittsburgh 31

Passing: McNair (Tenn.) 338 yds.

Rushing: Zereoue (Pitt.) 49 yds.

Receiving: Wycheck (Tenn.) 123 yds.

Oakland 30, NY Jets 10

Passing: Gannon (Oak.) 285 yds.

Rushing: Garner (Oak.) 93 yds.

Receiving: Porter (Oak.) 124 yds.

Tampa Bay 31, San Francisco 6

Passing: Johnson (Tam.) 196 yds.

Rushing: Alstott (Tam.) 60 yds.

Receiving: Johnson (Tam.) 85 yds.



SPORTS, from Page 5

But the kick stood — a kick that was the result of a penalty on the previous play by cornerback Dewayne Washington. He drew a 5-yard flag for running into Nedney, giving the kicker yet another chance, and he put the game-winner right down the middle.

That gave the Titans the franchise's first victory in four playoff games against Pittsburgh, and put them into the AFC championship game against Oakland Raiders.

Eagles fly past Falcons

PHILADELPHIA — Donovan McNabb took the snap and dropped into his own end zone. No one was open, so he scrambled to his right, scooted past a defender flying through the air and finally stepped out of bounds with a 19-yard gain.

Right away, McNabb made it clear his right ankle was in good shape — and the Philadelphia Eagles were in good hands.



Donovan McNabb came back to complete 20 of 30 passes for 247 yards and a touchdown.

McNabb's triumphant return from a broken ankle led Philadelphia past Michael Vick's Atlanta Falcons 20-6 Saturday night, putting the Eagles within a victory of their first Super Bowl in 22 years.

"I always said I could move," said McNabb, playing his first game since injuring his right ankle Nov. 17. "Everybody else said I couldn't."

Vick's eye-popping speed and prodigious arm might one day carry him to heights higher than McNabb. Not on this frigid night at the "Concrete Jungle."

Crusty ol' Veterans Stadium, occupied by 66,452 towel-waving fans, will hang around for one more game, the NFC title game next Sunday against either Tampa Bay or San Francisco.

The Falcons, who became the first visiting team ever to win a playoff game at Green Bay's Lambeau Field last weekend, couldn't pull off another upset against the Eagles, the NFC's top-seeded team.

"You need to have home games in the playoffs," Vick said. "It's tough to win on the road in the playoffs. The turf was tough, and they seemed to be getting the calls."

Solution from Saturday's No Rocket Scientist Crossword in the *Freedom Watch*

(Courtesy of QUIZLAND.com)



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support